

EAST COAST HYDROGEN TEESSIDE PIPELINE PROGRAMME DOCUMENT

Applicant Name: NGN

PINS Case Reference: EN0710010

Document Reference: ECH DCO-2

we are
the network

Version	Date	Summary of changes	Prepared by	Approved by
00	09/04/2026	First issue to PINS	Arup	NGN
01	30/04/2026	Second issue to PINS	Arup	NGN
02	20/05/2026	Updates to Programme	Arup	NGN

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1 Introduction

Northern Gas Networks (the Applicant) has prepared this Programme Document for East Coast Hydrogen Teesside Pipeline (the Project), a proposed linear hydrogen pipeline between Skinningrove, Teesside in Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and Newton Aycliffe in Durham County Council.

The purpose of the Programme Document is to set out the steps that the Applicant anticipates taking during the preparation of a Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the Project. The Programme Document describes the activities required for an effective pre-application process having regard to the Government's ongoing reforms to the regime for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP).

This Programme Document has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance published by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and UK Government:

- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus (the Prospectus)¹.
- Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects² (the Pre-application stage guidance).
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Preparing Applications for Linear Projects³.

This Programme Document provides the information requested in Paragraphs 008 and 009 of the Prospectus and Paragraph 010 of the Pre-application stage guidance. It is a live document and is being monitored and updated throughout the pre-application process for the Project. Any updates will be notified to PINS, relevant statutory bodies, local authorities and other interested stakeholders.

The latest version of this Programme Document will be provided to PINS at least 10 working days prior to each programmed interaction, in line with Paragraph 009 of the Prospectus.

The latest version of the Programme Document will be published on the Applicant's website available at: <https://ngn-eastcoast.co.uk/> on project launch.

In line with the requirements of Paragraph 009 of the Prospectus, this Programme Document has been prepared using the template structure provided by PINS.

¹ PINS, 2024. *Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-2024-pre-application-prospectus> [Accessed March 2026].

² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2024. *Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-act-2008-pre-application-stage-for-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects> [Accessed March 2026].

³ PINS, 2025. *Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Preparing Applications for Linear Projects*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-on-preparing-applications-for-linear-projects> [Accessed March 2026].

2 Background to the project

2.1 The Applicant

The Applicant distributes natural gas to homes and businesses in the north of England. They are responsible for supplying North, East and West Yorkshire, the North East and North Cumbria. The East Coast region is home to the UK's two largest industrial emission clusters (Tees Valley & Humber), hosting concentrated industrial energy demand, significant gas storage and abundant offshore wind power.

2.2 The Project

2.2.1 East Coast Hydrogen

East Coast Hydrogen (ECH) is an energy transition initiative from the Applicant in collaboration with Cadent and National Gas Transmission (NGT), to repurpose and expand the existing >2barg gas network for hydrogen delivery across the North-East and Yorkshire. By converting existing assets and introducing new infrastructure, the project will create a reliable hydrogen network to support decarbonisation. This development is crucial to the UK's net zero ambitions and will help decarbonise energy supply for the region.

More detail on the wider East Coast Hydrogen project can be found at:

<https://www.eastcoasthydrogen.co.uk/>

The Applicant has developed a proposed hydrogen distribution network based upon anticipated demand and hydrogen production estimates, including stakeholder engagement, identifying the two areas with the most potential for early deployment, firstly from Humber across to West Yorkshire (subject to a separate DCO application) and secondly, in Teesside (the Project). This network will be developed further during Front-End Engineering Design (FEED) which commenced in 2025 and is anticipated to end in 2027.

The aim of the FEED stage is to develop a detailed solution with the necessary level of technical and commercial certainty to prepare a viable investment proposal for a hydrogen network that supports the decarbonisation of connected users within the Applicant's footprint.

As part of the FEED stage, the Applicant is commencing the necessary consenting, consultation and environmental assessment activities for each route.

2.2.2 East Coast Hydrogen Teesside Pipeline

As currently proposed, the Project that will be subject to the DCO application comprises approximately 63km of new and potentially repurposed underground hydrogen pipelines located within the administrative boundaries of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, Stockton Borough Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council. The new pipeline will transport hydrogen and repurposing of existing natural gas pipelines will also be undertaken to allow these to transport hydrogen. The pipelines required are High Pressure (HP) (>7bar) and Intermediate Pressure (IP) (2>7bar).

Associated infrastructure will include a range of Above Ground Installations (AGIs) which are required to facilitate the control of hydrogen on the network, including Pressure Reduction Installations (PRI), Block Valve Stations (BVS) and district governors.

Figure 1 provides a map of the indicative route that is being developed.



Figure 1: EAST COAST HYDROGEN TEESSIDE PIPELINE

2.3 The Planning Act 2008 Process

The Project falls within the definition of an NSIP under Part 3 Regulation 20 of the Planning Act 2008, and therefore there is a requirement to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) from the relevant Secretary of State.

2.4 Other Consents and Licences

There may be a need for other consents and licences, and these will be identified as assessment work on the Project progresses and set out in a Schedule of Licences and Other Consents to accompany the DCO Application, in accordance with the requirements of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009⁴.

2.5 Policy Context

The policy framework for examining and determining applications for DCOs is set out within a suite of National Policy Statements (NPS). The following NPS are considered to be of relevance:

- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)⁵.
- National Policy Statement for Natural Gas Supply Infrastructure and Gas and Oil Pipelines (EN-4)⁶.
- The Secretary of State may consider the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adopted development plans of relevant Local Planning Authorities (listed in Section 2.2.2) as other matters both important and relevant to decision-making.

3 The Planning Inspectorate's pre-application service

At this early FEED stage of the Project, the Applicant proposes that the **Basic (Tier 1) service** is used, as defined in the Pre-Application Prospectus, because this provides a proportionate approach. This will be reviewed as the Project progresses. It is anticipated that later in the programme, the Applicant will wish to adopt the Tier 2 service tier and will notify PINS when this is the case.

⁴ HMSO. The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2009/2264/contents/made> [Accessed March 2026].

⁵ Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2025. *Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-2025> [Accessed March 2026].

⁶ Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2023. *National Policy Statement for Natural Gas Supply Infrastructure and Gas and Oil Pipelines (EN-4)*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-policy-statement-for-natural-gas-supply-infrastructure-and-gas-and-oil-pipelines-en-4> [Accessed March 2026].

It is not proposed that the Project utilises a Fast Track procedure, nor at this point does the Applicant consider that any of the supplementary components identified within the enhanced tier service are necessary.

4 The pre-application programme

4.1 Consultation

The Applicant's first stage of consultation is anticipated to take place in Autumn 2026, followed by a second stage of consultation, anticipated to take place Q2 2027.

The Applicant understands that an Adequacy of Consultation Milestone is likely to remain following reforms to the NSIP regime and will take place at least 3 months prior to submission of the Application, in line with Paragraph 025 of the Pre-application stage guidance.

4.2 Engagement with PINS

At this stage of the project, and in accordance with the Applicant's request for Tier 1 consideration, meetings with PINS are requested to discuss project progress and programme at the following intervals in Year 1 as a minimum:

- PINS Inception Meeting – held 15th April 2026 to introduce the project and agree the tier level of service.
- Project Update (Post-EIA Scoping) – Autumn 2026.
- Project Update (Post our initial stage of consultation) – Spring 2027.

Project update meetings will then continue as required, at a frequency to be agreed. It is anticipated these meetings will then occur at key milestones, for instance prior to and post the second stage of consultation and prior to submission. Additional meetings may be sought should these be identified as necessary.

Draft document review may be required in advance of DCO application submission.

4.3 Engagement with Statutory Bodies, including local authorities

The Project is at an early stage and engagement with Statutory Bodies, including local authorities, is scheduled to commence in April and May 2026, including setting up cost recovery agreements for those bodies with powers to charge. Prescribed and non-prescribed consultees and local authorities will also be consulted by PINS to inform the EIA Scoping Opinion.

The Applicant intends to engage with relevant statutory bodies at the following stages:

- Prior to our first stage of consultation.
- Prior to our second stage of consultation.
- Prior to submission of the Application.

Discussions with local authorities on consultation proposals will also take place prior to consultation activities.

The Applicant will monitor any forthcoming statutory guidance on consultation and adapt its consultation and engagement strategy, as required. Additional meetings may be sought should these be identified as necessary.

Drafting of Statements of Common Ground and Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statements is anticipated to begin prior to submission of the Application.

4.4 Key Application Documents

Key application documents (including the Design Approach Document) will be prepared to support each relevant milestone:

- Prior to EIA Scoping.
- Prior to our first stage of consultation.
- Prior to our second stage of consultation.
- Prior to submission of the Application.

4.5 Environmental Impact Assessment

The Applicant will prepare the EIA Scoping Report in advance of the submission of the EIA Scoping Request.

The duty on an Applicant to prepare a Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) in advance of the second stage of consultation has been removed by recent planning and infrastructure reforms. The Applicant will review all statutory guidance and provide proportionate environmental information to support each stage of consultation.

The Environmental Statement will be prepared in advance of submission of the Application.

4.6 Submission

The Project is currently anticipated to be submitted in Q1 2028.

4.7 The Programme

Table 1 provides an illustration of the proposed programme to inform the above.

TABLE 1: PROGRAMME

	2026				2027				2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Key Project Milestone	Consenting pathway commences	PINS Inception EIA Scoping	Applicant's first stage of consultation		Engagement with local authorities prior to second stage of consultation	Applicant's second stage of consultation		Adequacy of Consultation or equivalent milestone	Submission			

5 Potential main issues for resolution

The Project is at a relatively early stage of development. The Applicant considers that the potential matters set out in Table 2 are likely to be the main potential issues for resolution during the pre-application process.

It is the Applicant's intention to resolve the issues prior to the submission of the DCO application as far as possible. The Applicant will produce a Potential Main Issues for Examination document prior to submission and submit this as part of the application package.

TABLE 2 POTENTIAL MAIN ISSUES FOR RESOLUTION

No.	Issue	Activities to resolve issue
1	Interface with other industrial projects and third party landowners	Aim to secure voluntary land agreements with land interests and agree protective provisions prior to submission of the DCO application, through engagement with third parties, other industrial projects and sharing of design details during the pre-application stage.
2	Cumulative effects	Engaging with other development planned in the vicinity of the project to minimise effects.
3	Biodiversity - The potential for areas of designated and non-designated habitats and ecological species to be directly impacted by construction works and operations	Assessments will be undertaken in the ES to define these once ecological and noise surveys are completed and as further details are available on locations for construction works, construction methods and types of plant and equipment to be used. Appropriate avoidance and/or mitigation measures will be included. Ongoing engagement with the relevant stakeholders up to the submission of the application will take place.
4	Marine Environment	Works in the marine environment (River Tees) may be required depending on crossing method chosen. Agreement of methodologies with the relevant statutory nature conservation bodies will be sought in order that it may be evidenced within the DCO application.

6 Engaging with statutory bodies

The Project is at an early stage and engagement with statutory bodies has commenced in April 2026. To inform the Secretary of State's EIA Scoping Opinion, statutory bodies will be consulted.

The Project is at an early stage and so other statutory bodies outside of the EIA Scoping Process will be identified and engaged with as necessary. As the assessment continues, anticipated principal areas of disagreement will be identified and resolved, where possible.

7 Engaging with local authorities

The host local authorities anticipated to be affected by the Project are:

- Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.
- Stockton Borough Council.

- Hartlepool Borough Council.
- Durham County Council.
- Darlington Borough Council.

The Project is at an early stage and engagement has commenced in April 2026 with host local authorities to introduce them to the Project, work undertaken to date, and programme for pre-application activities.

The Applicant will continue to engage with the local authorities to inform the environmental impact assessment work undertaken to support the DCO application.

The Applicant will produce principal areas of disagreement summary statements in discussion with local authorities once this process begins.

8 Pre-application risks

The Project is at an early stage and no significant risk to the achievement of the pre-application stage has been identified at this stage. A Risk Register has been established and will be maintained for the Project to identify and track potential risks. These risks will be reviewed internally by the Applicant and communicated with PINS where necessary.